

FGCU Food Forest

Plant Database

Pomegranate Fruit (*Punica Granatum*)

Quick Facts

Origin: South Asia
Description: Fruit-bearing deciduous shrub or small tree growing between 5–8 meters (16–26 ft) tall.
Harvest: All year round.
Damage Temp: 24 F

General Description: An attractive shrub or small tree, to 20 or 30 ft (6 or 10 m) high, the pomegranate is much-branched, more or less spiny, and extremely long-lived, some specimens at Versailles known to have survived two centuries. It has a strong tendency to sucker from the base. The leaves are evergreen or deciduous, opposite or in whorls of 5 or 6, short-stemmed, oblong-lanceolate, 3/8 to 4 in (1-10 cm) long, leathery.



- **Native Origin:** The pomegranate tree is native from Iran to the Himalayas in northern India and has been cultivated since ancient times throughout the Mediterranean region of Asia, Africa and Europe.
- **Harvesting Techniques:** The species is primarily mild-temperate to subtropical and naturally adapted to regions with cool winters and hot summers, but certain types are grown in home dooryards in tropical areas, such as various islands of the Bahamas and West Indies. In southern Florida, fruit development is enhanced after a cold winter. Elsewhere in the United States, the pomegranate can be grown outdoors as far north as Washington County, Utah, and Washington, D.C., though it doesn't fruit in the latter locations. It can be severely injured by temperatures below 12° F (-11.11° C). The plant favors a semi-arid climate and is extremely drought -tolerant.
- **Season of Harvest:** The fruits ripen 6 to 7 months after flowering.
- **Culinary Uses:** In some countries, such as Iran, the juice is a very popular beverage. Most simply, the juice sacs are removed from the fruit and put through a basket press. Otherwise, the fruits are quartered and crushed, or the whole fruits may be pressed and

the juice strained out. In Iran, the cut-open fruits may be stomped by a person wearing special shoes in a clay tub and the juice runs through outlets into clay troughs. Hydraulic extraction of juice should be at a pressure of less than 100 psi to avoid undue yield of tannin. The juice from crushed whole fruits contains excess tannin from the rind (as much as .175%) and this is precipitated out by a gelatin process. After filtering, the juice may be preserved by adding sodium benzoate or it may be pasteurized for 30 minutes, allowed to settle for 2 days, then strained and bottled. For beverage purposes, it is usually sweetened. Housewives in South Carolina make pomegranate jelly by adding 7 1/2 cups of sugar and 1 bottle of liquid pectin for every 4 cups of juice. In Saudi Arabia, the juice sacs may be frozen intact or the extracted juice may be concentrated and frozen, for future use. Pomegranate juice is widely made into grenadine for use in mixed drinks. In the Asiatic countries it may be made into thick syrup for use as a sauce. It is also often converted into wine.

- **Nutritional Value:** The juice of wild pomegranates yields citric acid and sodium citrate for pharmaceutical purposes. Pomegranate juice enters into preparations for treating dyspepsia and is considered beneficial in leprosy. The bark of the stem and root contains several alkaloids including *isopelletierine* which is active against tapeworms. Either a decoction of the bark, which is very bitter, or the safer, insoluble Pelletierine Tannate may be employed. Overdoses are emetic and purgative, produce dilation of pupila, dimness of sight, muscular weakness and paralysis.

Pomegranate Fruit
Scientific Classification
Kingdom: Plantae
(unranked): Angiosperms
(unranked): Eudicots
(unranked): Rosids
Order: Myrtales
Family: Lythraceae
Genus: Punica
Species: <i>P. granatum</i>

Sources

<http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/pomegranate.html>